(e) No, Sir.

(0 Yes, Sir.

(g) The visit of the US First Lady generated considerable goodwill between the two countries.

The visit also provided an opportunity to share views on important social issues confronting India and the U.S. It also enabled the visiting dignitary see at first hand the manner in which India was facing the challenges of economic and social development.

Indo-US Talks on Kashmir

6192. SHRI T. VENKATRAM REDDY: SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-items captioned. "US Inconsistent on Kashmir issue." appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 4th March, 1995;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government have held any talks with the US in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and the response of the US thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) "Yes, Sir.

(b) The news-item is based on various statements, Congressional testimonies and remarks to the media by US Administration officials, and on official press guidance issued by the State Department over the past year.

(c) and (d) Government have an ongoing dialogue with the US Government on bilateral regional and international issues of mutual interest. India's positions on the issues referred to in the news-item have been reiterated to the US. The US, on its part, has also provided clarifications on its positions. These exchange have resulted in improved understanding of each other's positions on these matters.

Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement to Curb Terrorism

6193. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sri Lankan President visited New Delhi in March this year;

(b) if so, the details of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding signed during her visit;

(c) what steps have been taken and are being taken to foster closer bilateral, economic and trade relations with that country .in the Light thereof; and

(d) whether any understanding was reached about the ways to curb and control terrorism in the sub-continent; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes Sir, the Sri Lankan President visited New Dehi in March this year.

(b) No Agreement or memoranda of Understanding were signed during her visit;

(c) As a follow up to the visit, India has reduced import duties on 18 items of export interest to Sri Lanka. India has also agreed to extend a credit equivalent to US $ 30 million to Sri Lanka to facilitate trade and commercial exchanges with India. Both sides agreed that there is a vast potential for expansion of trade to mutual benefit, and for increased Indian Investments in Sri Lanka.

(d) The issue did not feature in the talks.